

Amendments to the Drawings

Please delete all Figures.

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the Office Action of September 3, 2008. This Amendment is in full response thereto. Thus, Applicants respectfully request continued examination and allowance of the application.

Claims 7-12 are pending in this application.

Objection to the Drawings

The Examiner objected to the Drawings as being unclear. Applicant has deleted all the Figures and so has mooted the objection.

Specification

The Examiner suggested to add the heading "Brief Description of the Drawings" to page 5 of the Specification. Applicant has adopted the Examiner's suggestion.

First Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103:

Claims 7, 8 and 10-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Drnevich, et al. (USPN 5,582,036) in view of Wang, et al. (US Pub. 2003/0213688). Applicant respectfully traverses because Drnevich, et al. and Wang, et al. fail to disclose, teach, or suggest feeding oxygen having a purity above 90% by volume of O₂ being fed to a blast furnace. Rather, Drnevich, et al. discloses oxygen-enriched air of 21-40 mole percent O₂ is fed to a blast furnace. Thus, the rejection should be withdrawn.

Second Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103:

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Drnevich, et al. (USPN 5,582,036) as applied to claim 7 above, and further in view of Drenvich (USPN 5,802,875). Applicant respectfully traverses because Drnevich, et

al. and Drenvich fail to disclose, teach, or suggest feeding oxygen having a purity above 90% by volume of O₂ being fed to a blast furnace as explained above. Thus, the rejection should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is believed that the present application now stands in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. Should the examiner believe a telephone call would expedite the prosecution of the application, he/she is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number listed below.

It is not believed that any fee is due at this time. If that belief is incorrect, please debit deposit account number 01-1375. Also, the Commissioner is authorized to credit any overpayment to deposit account number 01-1375.

Respectfully submitted,

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